

2. Objections to the Drawings

The drawings stand objected to as allegedly failing to include a reference numeral 80 for the “common center element” as set forth on page 10 of the above-referenced patent application. Applicants have amended original **Fig. 5** in order to include reference numeral 80 for the common center element. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the drawings.

3. Objections to Claim 14

Claim 14 stands objected to as allegedly including typographical errors. Specifically, with respect to claim 14, the Office Action alleges that the phrase “pressure-resistant member” should be replaced by the phrase “compression-resistant member,” and the phrase “tube 12” should be replaced by the word “tube.” Applicants have amended original claim 14 in accordance with the Examiner’s suggestions. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection to claim 14.

4. 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 3-7, 9, 12, and 16 stand rejected as allegedly anticipated by Gerts. “A claim is anticipated if and only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.” MPEP 2131. The Office Action alleges that Gerts describes each and every element as set forth in claims 1, 3-7, 9, 12, and 16. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Applicants have amended original claim 1 in order to incorporate the limitations of original claim 3. As such, amended claim 1 describes a tripod having at least one cam locking unit which, when in an engaged position, “allows extension of said leg assembly but prevents relative axial movement which would shorten the length of said leg assembly.” (Emphasis added.)

In contrast, Gerts describes a tripod comprising a first leg 14, a second leg 15, and a third leg 16 connected by a first link 17, a second link 18, a latch 19, and a plate 20. Leg 14, leg 15, and leg 16 may move longitudinally relative to each other, such that legs 14-16 may be extended or shortened. The tripod also may comprise a wedge lock. The wedge lock comprises a plate 34 having an opening formed therethrough, and a thumb piece 33. In operation, when one of legs 14-16 extend longitudinally, such that thumb piece 33 is positioned adjacent to the opening formed through plate 34, thumb piece 33 springs outward and engages the opening of plate 34. When thumb piece 33 engages the opening of plate 34, the wedge lock locks legs 14-16 in a fixed position. See, e.g., Gerts, Page 1, Lines 70-97; Page 2, Lines 55-59; and **Fig. 1**.

Nevertheless, because the wedge lock locks the legs in a fixed position when the wedge lock is in the engaged position, the wedge lock does not allow the legs to extend when in the engaged position. Thus, Gerts fails at least to describe a tripod having at least one cam locking unit which, when in an engaged position, "allows extension of said leg assembly but prevents relative axial movement which would shorten the length of said leg assembly," as set forth in amended claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the anticipation rejection of claim 1.

Claims 4-7, 9, 12, and 16 depend from amended claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner also withdraw the anticipation rejection of claims 4-7, 9, 12, and 16. Moreover, Applicants have canceled original claim 3, without prejudice. Therefore, the Anticipation rejection of claim 3 now is moot.

5. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 2, 10, 11, and 13 stand rejected as allegedly rendered obvious by Gerts in view of Johnson, and claim 8 stands rejected as allegedly rendered obvious by Gerts in view of Sassmannshausen. Moreover, claims 14 and 15 stand rejected as allegedly rendered obvious by Gerts in view of Jones. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Applicants have amended original claim 1 in order to describe a tripod having at least one cam locking unit which, when in an engaged position, "allows extension of said leg assembly but prevents relative axial movement which would shorten the length of said leg assembly." As described above, Applicants maintain that Gerts fails at least to describe a tripod having at least one cam locking unit which, when in an engaged position, "allows extension of said leg assembly but prevents relative axial movement which would shorten the length of said leg assembly," as set forth in amended claim 1. Moreover, the Office Action does not allege that Johnson, Sassmannshausen, Jones, or any other reference disclose or suggest these missing elements. Claims 2, 8, 10, 11, and 13-15 depend from amended claim 1. "If an independent claim is non-obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious." MPEP 2143.03 (citations omitted). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the obviousness rejection of claims 2, 8, 10, 11, and 13-15.

CONCLUSION

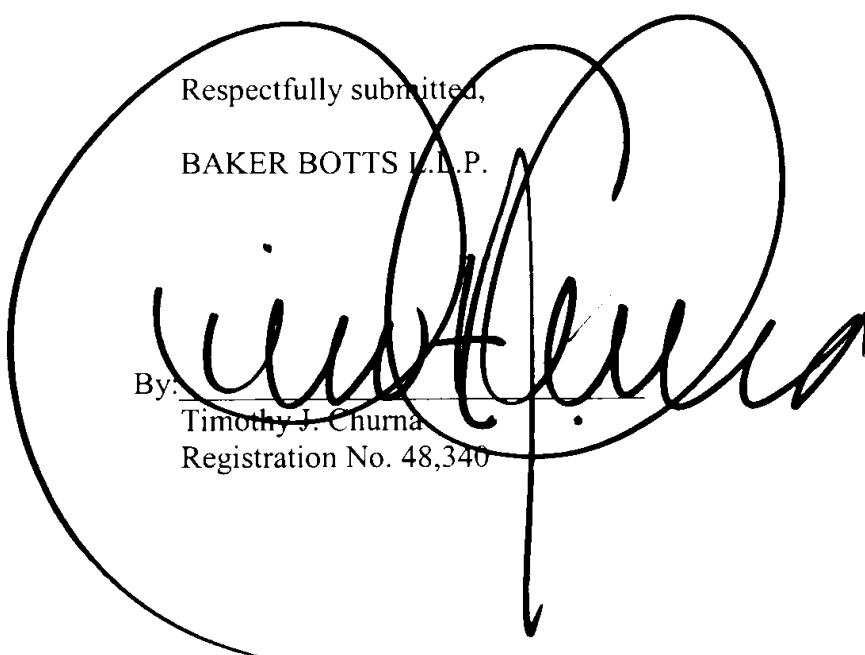
Applicants respectfully submit that this application, as amended, is in condition for allowance, and such disposition is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicants' representatives, either in person or by telephone, would expedite

prosecution of this application, we would welcome such an opportunity. Applicants believe that no fees are due as a result of this responsive amendment. Nevertheless, in the event of any variance between the fees determined by Applicant and those determined by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, please charge any such variance to the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 02-0375.

Dated: May 21, 2002

Respectfully submitted,

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

By:   
Timothy J. Churna  
Registration No. 48,340

Baker Botts L.L.P.  
The Warner, Suite 1300  
1299 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20004-2400  
Tel: (202) 639-7700  
Fax: (202) 639-7890

JBA/TJC/dh

Enclosures



PATENT  
Attorney Docket No. 021619.0106

MARKEED-UP COPY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS AND DRAWINGS

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please replace original **Fig. 5** with replacement **Fig. 5**. Applicants are including replacement **Figs. 4** and **5** (**Figs. 4** and **5** originally were submitted on the same page) with this responsive amendment. For the Examiner's convenience, Applicants also are including a marked-up copy of **Fig. 5**, with the changes marked in red ink, with this responsive amendment.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel original claim 3, without prejudice.

Please amend original claims 1 and 14, as follows:

1. (amended) A fast-deployable light weight tripod, comprising
  - a) a center support for supporting a load, provided with three peripheral hinge members;
  - b) at least three multi-stage telescoping leg assemblies each attached to one of said hinge members, each leg assembly comprising at least two compression-resistant members interconnected by a telescopic joint;
  - c) at least one cam locking unit associated with each telescopic joint, each locking unit having a first engaged position which allows extension of said leg assembly but prevents [preventing] relative axial movement which would shorten the length of said leg assembly, and a second disengaged position wherein said assemblies are free to move in either axial direction, each locking unit being urged towards its engaged position for automatic locking of said tripod in its deployed position with said cam locking being effected by pressure on said cam unit from its associated extended leg; and further comprising
  - d) a hand accessible release element for each leg assembly for independently releasing said at least one cam locking unit associated therewith, thereby enabling the shortening of the length of said assembly.
14. (amended) A tripod according to claim 1, wherein each [pressure-resistant] compression-resistant member comprises at least one plastic, fiber-reinforced [tube12] tube.